

-- Figure 1a is a bar chart showing the relative weights of fiber, oil and water when untreated fiber was used to remove medium fuel oil from water.

Figure 1b is a bar chart showing the relative weights of fiber, oil and water when acetylated fiber was used to remove medium fuel oil from water.

Figure 2a is a bar chart showing the relative weights of fiber, oil and water when untreated fiber was used to remove transformer oil from water.

Figure 2b is a bar chart showing the relative weights of fiber, oil and water when acetylated fiber was used to remove transformer oil from water.—

IN THE CLAIMS

Amend claims 17 and 22 as follows:

17. (amended) The method as claimed in claim 1 in which [said method is for retaining] the hydrophobic water-immiscible liquid is transformer oil [on] and the modified lignocellulosic plant material is in the form of a paper.

22. (amended) A sheet of lignocellulosic plant material which is in a form selected from the group consisting of paper and fabric, and which has been modified by esterification of hydroxyl groups in the lignin of the lignocellulosic material such as to render the material more attractive to hydrophobic water-immiscible liquids while still retaining hydrogen bonding to maintain the structural integrity of the material.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified patent application, as amended, is respectfully requested. The specification has been objected to for certain deficiencies which are addressed herein. Claims 1, 3-6, 8-17, 20-22, 24 and 25 remain in the case,

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